

Joseph Walker Cottage
278 North Main Street
Concord
Merrimack County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-163

HABS
NH,
7-CON,
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOSEPH WALKER COTTAGE

HABS No. NH-163

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Location: 278 North Main Street, Concord, Merrimack County,
New Hampshire

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Edgar F. Woodman, 276 North Main
Street, Concord, N.H.

Present Use: Private Residence.

Significance: Virtually unchanged example of one of the house
types advocated in the books of Andrew Jackson
Downing (1815-1852). Fine example of rural taste
of the middle Victorian period. The cottage is
adjacent to the Reverend Timothy Walker House
(HABS No. NH-166) and affords an interesting
architectural contrast with it.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Built by Joseph Burbeen Walker (1822-1913), the present owner's grandfather. It descended to his son, Joseph Timothy Walker, and from thence to its present owner, Mrs. Josephine (Walker) Woodman, daughter of J. T. Walker.
2. Date of erection: C. 1855-60. Based on style and what is known of J. B. Walker's life as related by his granddaughter.
3. Architect: Almost an exact copy of A. J. Downing's Design III "A Symmetrical Bracketed Cottage" as published in the Architecture of Country Houses, N.Y., 1851, pp. 83-92. J. B. Walker's own copy of this book, with his name and the date 1851 inscribed on the fly leaf is still in the possession of his granddaughter.

5. Notes on Alterations and Additions: The screened in rear porch on the north side is probably a slightly later addition. To the rear of the kitchen is a small one storey ell, now a tool shed, probably contemporary with the original building.

B. Historical events connected with structure:

None known. The cottage was probably built more as a whimsy for J. B. Walker than as a needed structure.

Important old views: None known.

Prepared by: Charles B. Wood III
N. H. Historical Soc
May 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION.

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Virtually an exact copy (except for minor variations in interior arrangement) of Andrew Jackson Downing's Design III, "A Symmetrical Bracketed Cottage" as published in The Architecture of Country Houses, N. Y., 1851, pp. 83-92.

2. Condition of Fabric: Very good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: 15 feet deep, 30 feet wide
2. Foundations: Quarried Granite blocks
3. Wall Construction: Balloon Frame. Vertical boarding with battens on exterior. It is impossible to tell whether or not there is double weather boarding as Downing recommends on page 45. The exterior is still the original colour: a dark chocolate brown.
4. Porches, etc: Front sitting porch under overhanging gable. Large screened in porch on north side of rear part of house which is a slightly later addition. One story rear ell for woodshed built at same time as main house. Front porch very elaborate; composed of fancy scroll profile brackets which support the front gable. Turned drops and scroll profile skirt decorate the lower edge of projecting gable.

5. Chimneys: Three. One at each gable end of front part of house and one at gable end of rear part. Brick stacks with string courses as illustrated in Downing.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Front doorway is a simple wooden frame. Original four panel door is flanked on top and sides by transom lights and side lights. Entry way on north side of rear part of house has heavy and elaborate scroll brackets which support a sloping hood.
- b. Windows and shutters: In the front gable are three double hung pointed sash windows, framed by a half round wooden molding in imitation of stone moldings of real gothic. Remaining front windows consist of a pair each of 4 over 4 double hung sash windows side by side; sloping sill and hood supported by scroll cut brackets as illustrate in Fig. 17 of Country Houses. No shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, Covering: Steep pitched gable roof covered with slates; ridge line covered with sheets of lead.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Pronounced overhand in eaves, approximately 18" on all four sides; supported on plain rafter brackets.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: Dormer window on south side of rear part of house- thoroughly covered with battens and brackets.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans: Ground floor: Central entry hall with stair leading up and straight away (This feature differs from Downing's plan which calls for a curved stair in a cramped space). Living room on south, dining room or parlour on north, kitchen and pantry in rear. Second floor: Central stair hall with balustrade, four bedrooms and bath.
- 2. Stairways: One. Single run, leads straight back from the entry hall. Valled in on both sides. Upper hall has balustrade of plain dowel balusters.
- 3. Flooring: Mill cut pine boards of random width. South parlor has hardwood floor.

JOSEPH WALKER COTTAGE
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4. Wall and Ceiling finish: Walls either modern wall-paper or paint. All ceilings plaster. High baseboards with heavy bead molding at top.
5. Doorways and doors: Four panel doors (panels recessed) on butt hinges. Simple surrounds with projecting molding at top.
6. Trim: Apart from baseboards and door frames there is none. Simple fireplace surround in South parlor. Fireplace surround in north parlor incorporates gothic arch into its design.
7. Hardware: All original. Brown glass door knobs. Butt hinges. Front door has "New Britain Corbin's Bell".
8. Lighting: Electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Oil burner, hot air ducts.

D. Site:

1. Orientation: Front of cottage faces West, about 20 feet back from the street. Part of the Old Walker Farm; the old house of Rev. Timothy Walker (q.v.) is to the south and the Walker barn to the north.
2. Enclosures: Lilac hedge across front property line.
3. Outbuildings: None directly related to the cottage.
4. Walks, drives: None, except front walk.
5. Landscaping, gardens, etc: simple, not original. In Rev. Timothy Walker's diary for May 2 1764 it is stated that he "set out eight elm trees about my house". Two of these were in front of the Gothic cottage. They were all taken down about 1890. For photo see Grace P. Amsden, A Capitol for New Hampshire, Typescript copy in NHHS Library, Ch XI, p. 4.

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